



Interreg



EUROPEAN UNION

Danube Transnational Programme

MELIA Observatory

HANDBOOK

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Manipulation
and
Propaganda**

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Project Summary

Citizen's competence is of crucial importance for active political participation, which is one of the main components of good governance and sustainable democracy. Especially in the Eastern part of the Danube region, political participation is stagnating. Particularly worrisome are the apathy and lack of political interest on the side of younger population. Furthermore, in the last years, we witness political developments that result in deterioration of democratic standards in many parts of the region. The core element of the citizen's competence is high level of media literacy. It is necessary for citizens' reflection of social reality and their resilience to negative media phenomena, like hate speech and fake news.

The main objective of the project is to improve democratic transnational governance by developing transnational media literacy observatory, based on cooperation between different relevant stakeholders. In many countries of the Danube region the development of competences of media literacy and active citizenship are far behind more developed parts of Europe. This observatory will serve as a mechanism for increasing media literacy and thus strengthening citizens' competences what will contribute to development of sustainable democracy. The main target groups are the youth and the people who work with them. For the purpose of strengthening it, the observatory will provide tools, available for both young people as well as their educators.

The project will establish observatory for media literacy that will provide instruments for scrutinising media contents, training tools and policy recommendations for upgrading media literacy in relation with other civic skills. Outputs include: capacity building and training tools, web-based interface and policy recommendations. The core activities of the project are: mapping of practices and dissemination of information, developing learning system, designing web training platform, and pilot testing.

How to work with this Handbook and interactive presentation

Dear students,

this handbook serves as a guide for an interactive presentation on the topic of „Manipulation and Propaganda“.

Open the interactive presentation in a new window of your browser. If you work independently, open it on your computer, or you can project it on an interactive whiteboard.

To work with the presentation, open or print this document.

The presentation contains several slides (presentation slides) with teaching material and visual content. Read and view each slide carefully. If you see an “i” icon on the slide in the lower left corner, click on it. Under it, there is additional information or examples that will help you better understand the issue.

Some slides have interactive elements in addition to the „i“ button. These elements are highlighted. When you click on them, you will learn more information (there can for example an audio sample, video or additional information). You will also find an audio icon in the presentation. Some slides contain sound. If necessary, you can click on the sound icon to mute or reactivate the sound in the presentation.

Click on the right arrow for the next slide. If you want to go back in the presentation, click on the left arrow. To go back to the very beginning of the presentation, click on the house icon.

For better orientation in the text, individual slides are gradually displayed with additional educational material and further expansion of teaching.

The text is interspersed with **definitions**, because you come across some terms for the first time and it is advisable to remember them.

Also pay attention to the **Interesting facts**.

Caption to the texts in the handbook:



INTERESTING FACT



DEFINITIONS

Introduction to the lesson

Has anyone ever convinced you to make an action/decision you initially didn't want to make? Did you manage to convince someone to do what you want? Can you think of a specific example?

Exposing lies and finding the truth can sometimes be difficult. Often it can be so well hidden and tangled that it slips through our fingers. Getting people to believe that finding it is impossible is exactly the goal of deceivers and manipulators. To confuse people and indirectly make them accept things as they are. But name-calling and complaining about the system won't change anything. If I want change, I have to be part of it. To expose the skyre and conscientiously vote for what I believe is best, not just for me.

In this lesson you will be introduced to the concept of manipulation and manipulation techniques that are often used. Most people get most of their information from the internet - and it is this environment that has become a haven for manipulators. Don't you believe it? Manipulation often hides from forms in which it is difficult to detect. You can encounter it on any website, including social networking sites. Examples were selected that the target group can most often meet in their environment. They get acquainted with the types of manipulators through an animated video.

With the help of visual elements, you will learn acquainted with the interpretation in photographs and its distortion, as well as manipulation in photographs. In this lesson, we deal with the concept of propaganda, censorship and self-censorship.

Manipulation

How do you imagine manipulation?

Has anyone ever persuaded you to take an action or make a decision that you did not originally want to make?

And did you recognize that you were being manipulated?

Or conversely, maybe you have managed to persuade someone to do what you want?

▶ Give yourself an example.

On this slide you can read the definition of **Manipulation**.

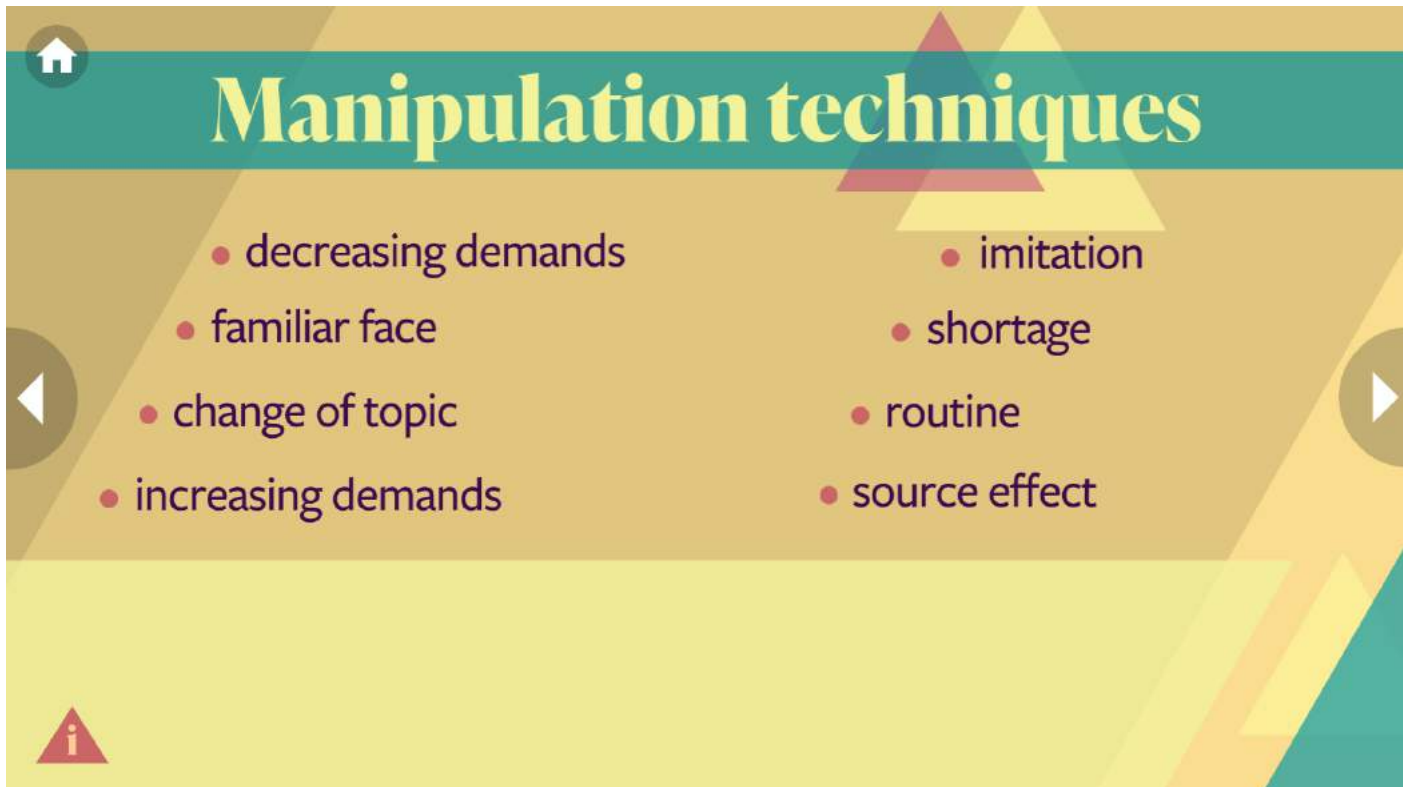
MANIPULATION

*Influencing other people in order to change attitudes, opinions, behaviour.
It often uses emotions.*

Manipulation techniques

There are many ways to induce someone to do what you want. An experienced manipulator can choose a suitable technique for a specific person.

Click on the slide to see the specific manipulation technique.



As you can see on the slide, you can move the mouse cursor on each technique and view its „detail“. Choose the one that interests you and click on it one by one. You will see a specific description that should help you understand the technique. On the following slides, you will see the descriptions one by one. Read them calmly to understand them well.

Techniques in the left column: their detail will appear in the lower part of the slide..

Decreasing demand

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Decreasing demands: A person does not submit his request straight away, he invents a more demanding one, from which he gradually reduces it to the originally intended one. Thus, the situation may seem more advantageous to us, as we bargained and the "original" demanding task is not required.

Familiar face

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Familiar face: We have more faith in someone we know in some way, whose face we have seen, whose name we have already heard...

Change of topic

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Change of topic: By changing the subject, the manipulator distracts us from something we wanted to deal with for some reason (e.g. because it is important to us).

Increasing demand

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Increasing demands: The person in question first wants a trifle, to which he gradually adds other requests, which may seemingly be related to the original request and thus be "part of it".

You've done the first part and you can move on to the next. Maybe you've already personally experienced them. And if not, at least you'll be well prepared to recognize them.

Techniques in the right column: their detail will appear in the lower part of the slide.

Imitation

The slide features a title bar with a home icon and the text 'Manipulation techniques'. Below the title bar, there are two columns of bulleted items. The left column lists: decreasing demands, familiar face, change of topic, and increasing demands. The right column lists: imitation, shortage, routine, and source effect. At the bottom, there is a definition for 'Imitation' and an information icon.

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Imitation: When we don't know how to behave, we imitate others.

We have added an example of this technique because it is quite a current phenomenon in today's world. Imitating people who impress us in some way is common. But in the case of social media, don't be influenced by the number of followers. They can also be paid and so the value of reality can be very low.

Shortage

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Shortage: This persuasion technique focuses on what a person loses, if he/she does not take advantage of the offer/challenge, or does not fulfil it.

Routine

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Routine: We choose what we always do (what we are used to). The reason may be trust, good experience, ignorance of the competition... In the store, I automatically reach for the same product. However, there may be a better quality/cheaper/tastier product on the side shelf.

Source effect

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Source effect: If we learn information from a trusted and respected person or source (the media), there is a high probability that we will believe the information or we will be convinced. (Appearance can also be very important.)

You just learned about eight examples of manipulation techniques.

Manipulation techniques

There are many ways to induce someone to do what you want. An experienced manipulator can choose a suitable technique for a specific person.

INTERESTING FACT

There are more types of manipulation techniques.



Other examples of manipulation techniques are:

Technique: attractiveness, good/bad guy, dissonance, silence, compassion, gossip, scapegoat, authority, charisma, lying, flattery.

Look them up on the internet and always try to think of an example of behavior.

Audio sample

Test your ability to detect word manipulations. Click on the radio and listen to the sample. Try to determine what the speaker is doing, what/how he is trying to influence others.

Do not forget to have the sound on.

A screenshot of an audio player interface. The top section has a dark green background with a large purple triangle and the title 'Audio sample of word manipulation based on the Change of topic technique' in yellow text. Below this is a light yellow background with a black speaker icon on the left and the text 'Attack on a person' followed by a bullet point: 'to question credibility of the person as such and not of the arguments'. Navigation arrows are visible on the left and right sides.

Audio sample of word manipulation based on the Change of topic technique

Attack on a person

- to question credibility of the person as such and not of the arguments

Who's in the demo? Can you tell by the subject matter, speaking style or voice?

If necessary, we also include a transcript of the words from the audio sample:

Reporter: *"What do you say to Americans who are scared though? I guess, nearly 200 dead, 14,000 who are sick, millions, as you witnessed, who are scared right now. What do you say to Americans who are watching you right now who are scared?"*

Donald Trump: *"I say that you're a terrible reporter. That's what I say. I think that's a very nasty question and I think it's a very bad signal that you're putting out to the American people.. The American people are looking for answers and they're looking for hope, and you're doing sensationalism."*

After listening to the audio sample, answer questions:

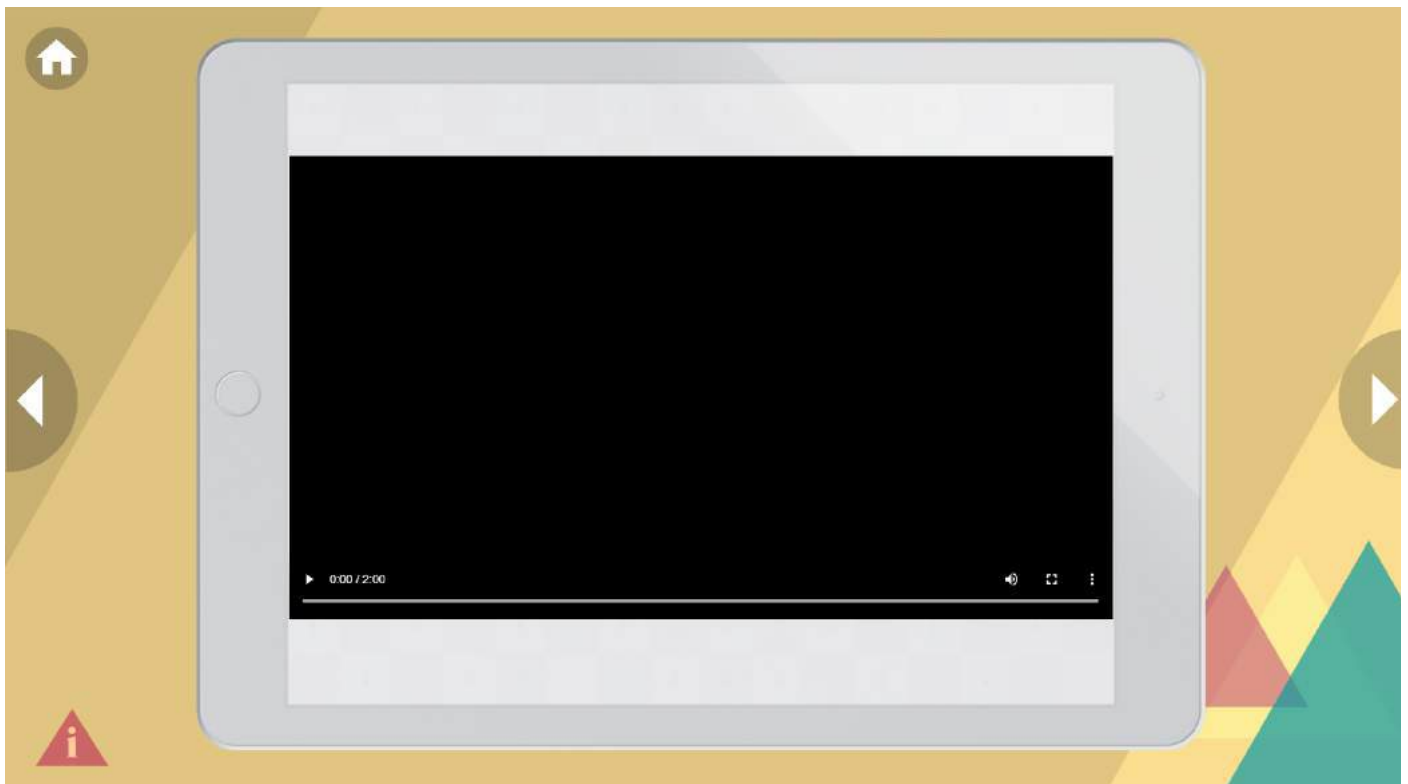
What would you call and describe the types of manipulations that appear in the example?

Which group of people is often mentioned?

Will all people perceive Donald Trump's response in the same way? Why?

Video

Those who manipulate us are called **manipulators**. It's usually used in casual conversation in a negative sense. Watch the video. We've prepared four examples of types of manipulators.



Think about it - does anyone around you behave the same way?



Think about whether you know a manipulator you have encountered, give an example. The most appropriate example would be found in internet articles on a political topic. Find a suitable example and try to analyse it. What technique do you think he/she used?

You can work with a classmate to find a suitable example together.

Interpretation - Sample 1

Take a look at the photos on the slide.
Come up with appropriate headings for each photo.

The slide features a title bar with the word "Interpretation" in yellow text on a green background. Below the title bar, the text reads: "U.s. Marines From The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit Help An Iraqi Soldier With Water From A Canteen In Southern Iraq, March 21, 2003". The main content area contains three side-by-side photographs. The left photo shows a soldier in a grey uniform with a gun pointed at him. The middle photo shows a soldier in a green camouflage uniform with a gun pointed at him while he receives water from a canteen. The right photo shows a soldier in a grey uniform receiving water from a canteen. The slide also includes a home icon in the top left, back and forward navigation arrows on the left and right sides, and an information icon in the bottom left corner.

On the **left picture** you see a soldier/prisoner with a gun pointed at him.

On the **right picture** you see a soldier/prisoner receiving a beverage.

But where is the truth?

The **middle picture** shows that although the man is detained, the gun is pointed directly at him and at the same time he is getting a beverage. But if you only saw the left picture in any media, what would you think of the U.S. Marines...?

Look at the info button and remind yourself what interpretation means.

Do photos have only one possible story?

Imagine that situation happens with the news in the media. Every reporter or editor can interpret the story in his own way: he can omit some information, shuffle their sequence, focus on a detail that may be unimportant to others... and suddenly there may be several different variants of the original situation.

Therefore, it is good to identify credible sources - those that provide verified and true information. It is from them that we should draw. We cannot guarantee that everything you learn will be 100% true, but we can count on mistakes or errors to occur minimally and, most importantly, unintentionally.

Interpretation = explanation of your understanding of the situation/thing/article ...

Interpretation - Sample 2

How does the image on the left affect you?

What impression would you get of the situation it depicts?

Interpretation

What media show us



The actual truth



The slide features a yellow and green geometric background. At the top left is a home icon. The title 'Interpretation' is in large yellow font on a green banner. Below are two side-by-side images. The left image is a close-up of a man in a grey uniform and vest holding a wooden board towards a young child in a blue shirt. The right image shows the same man in a wider shot, holding the board towards a group of children in a graffiti-covered alleyway. Navigation arrows are visible on the left and right sides of the image area.

Here is another example.

In the left picture you see a soldier and a scared child = civilian.

But in the picture on the right you can see that the soldier is actually playing a game with the children. Therefore the picture on the left is a misrepresentation.

Manipulating photos

Who is in the picture?

- ▶ The info button explains in detail **who** are people in the picture and **why** the figure on the right **was deleted** after some time.

For what purpose were pictures edited?

- ▶ To influence the behavior of an individual/ society in a certain direction.


Manipulating photos

Nikolai Yezhov, pictured right of Stalin, was later removed from this photograph at the Moscow Canal.

From what time period does this photo roughly date?

Try to think of what possibilities existed for manipulating photographs before and what exist today.

What can be done with photographs?



Stalin used a large group of photo retouchers to cut his enemies out of supposedly documentary photographs. One such erasure was Nikola Yezhov, a secret police official who oversaw Stalin's purges. For a while Yezhov worked at Stalin's right hand, interrogating, falsely accusing and ordering the execution of thousands of Communist Party officials. But in 1938, Yezhov fell from Stalin's favor after being usurped by one of his own deputies. He was denounced, secretly arrested, tried in a secret court, and executed.

Stalin's censors then removed Yezhov from the photographic record, including cutting him from a photograph in which he smiled next to his former boss, Stalin, next to a waterway. The photo retouchers removed Yezhov from the photo and inserted new water to cover up the space where Yezhov would have been.

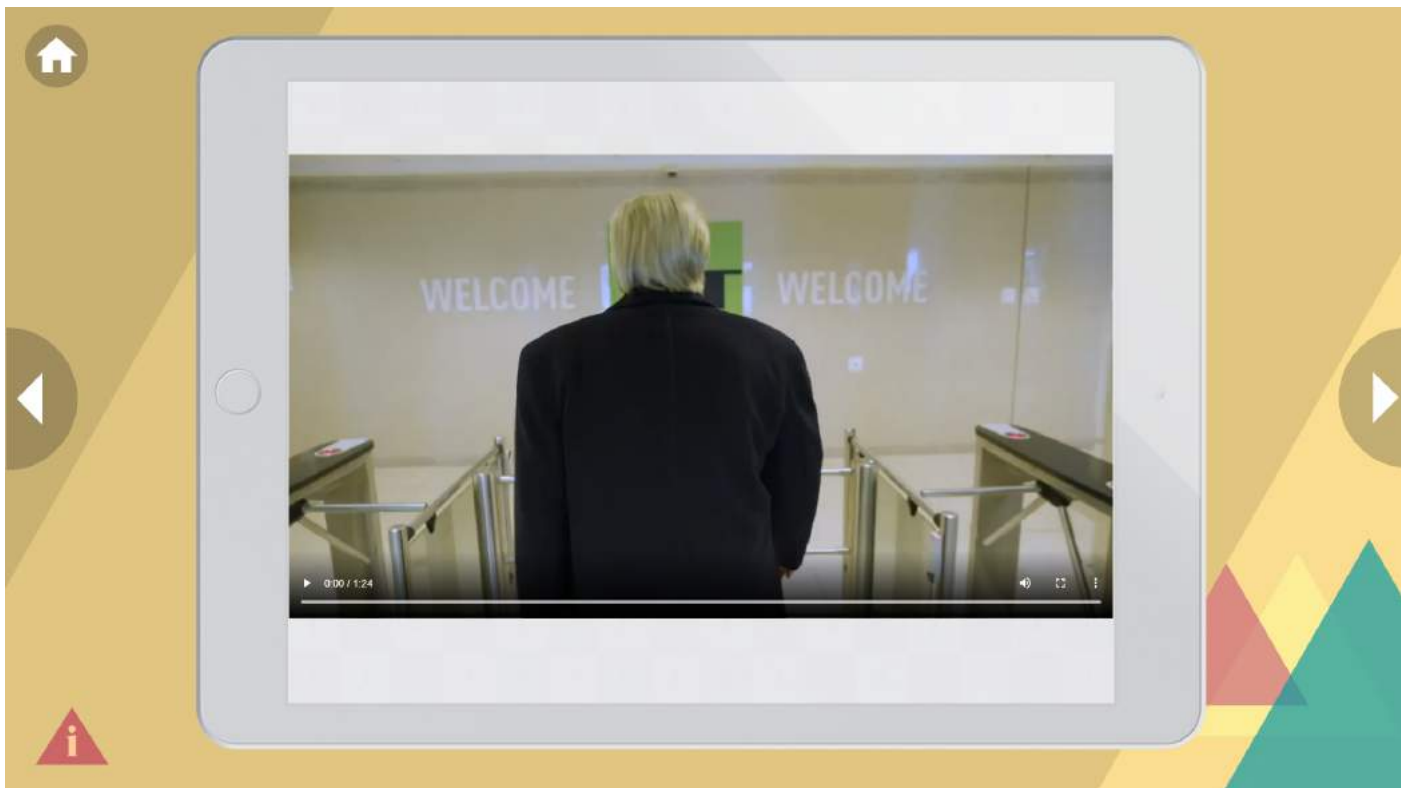
The media sometimes edit photos to describe the situation in a way that suits their purposes. Or rather, which article or photo the reader is more likely to click and view.

Sometimes they are supplied with photos for stories from verified sources, but still the photos may not be accurate in their narrative value. Therefore, you need to look at the article and the photos you read and view objectively and evaluate them critically.

Therefore, if you are not sure about an article, it is ideal to try to find it in other sources, as another medium has written about the situation.

Video

Watch a video clip from YouTube. Listen and watch carefully.
Is everything you see and hear true?



You just had a chance to watch the deepfake video.

What does deepfake mean?

▶ See info button.

In the demonstration we saw a deepfake.

A deepfake video released by the Russian state-controlled network RT pokes fun at US president Donald Trump.

Deepfake = video that pretends to be real footage. The videos use technology to put sentences in the mouths of speakers that they never said (or never said in context). The resulting videos look very real and believable.

Deepfake is created using digital technology. Professional processing can make it look very believable. It can be misused to spread the views of influencers or to damage them.

There are also several apps and websites where you can create your deepfake videos personally.

Source: YouTube

If it wasn't written in the video, **would you know right away that this is a hoax/parody?**

How do you think others would identify it? - your classmates, your parents, your grandparents... how believable is the look and the voice?

How would you verify the authenticity of the video?

Current trend

Current trend

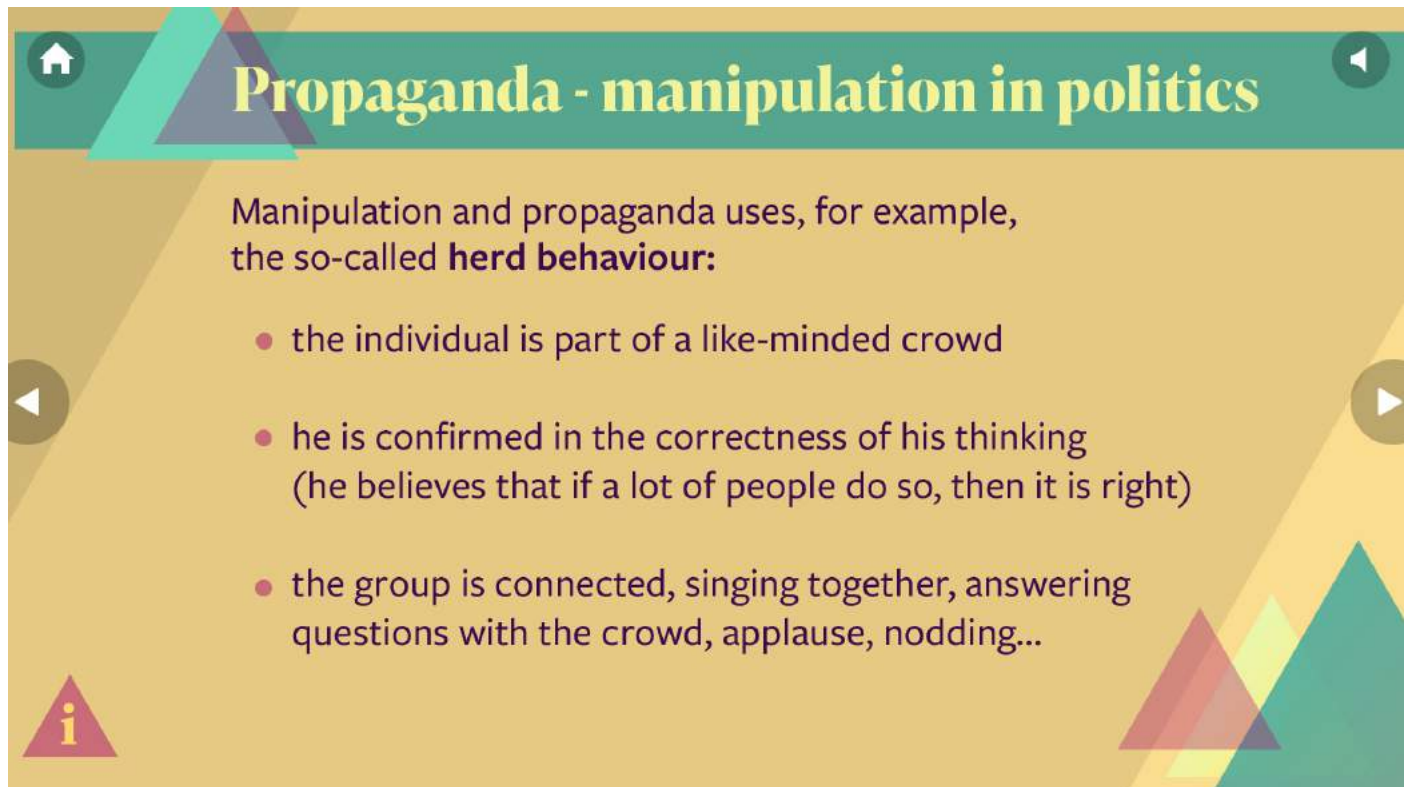
- People spend a large part of their lives in virtual environments, and much of the propaganda has moved there.
- Social networks give the opportunity to express opinions, to share posts and to influence or affect large numbers of people.
- Political propaganda has migrated here. Groups are forming on networks that use the principle of herd behaviour and purposefully manipulate the opinions or mindset of the group for their own prosperity.

As the world changes, social habits change as well. We've moved from the streets to the virtual world.

Propaganda - manipulation in politics

What is propaganda? Where can we most often encounter it? Give an example.

▶ the answer can be found in the info button



The slide features a teal header with a white home icon on the left and a white left arrow on the right. The title 'Propaganda - manipulation in politics' is written in yellow. The main content area is light brown and contains a paragraph followed by a bulleted list. On the left side of the content area, there is a grey left arrow. On the right side, there is a grey right arrow. At the bottom left, there is a red triangle containing a white lowercase 'i' for information. At the bottom right, there are overlapping teal and yellow triangles.

Propaganda - manipulation in politics

Manipulation and propaganda uses, for example, the so-called **herd behaviour**:

- the individual is part of a like-minded crowd
- he is confirmed in the correctness of his thinking (he believes that if a lot of people do so, then it is right)
- the group is connected, singing together, answering questions with the crowd, applause, nodding...

An effective strategy for manipulation and propaganda is, for example, the so-called **herd behaviour** - the individual is part of a like-minded crowd, so he is confirmed in the correctness of his thinking (he believes that if a lot of people do so, then it is right).

(Means of strengthening cohesiveness: singing together, answering questions with the crowd, applause, nodding...).

Propaganda = deliberate action, spreading of selected ideas (unsuitable information is concealed) in an effort to persuade society (individuals) to think and act in a certain way. It can take a large number of forms (spoken/written speech, posters, songs, statues, postage stamps, flags...). It can often be difficult to distinguish the boundaries of propaganda.

It has always been there, it uses elements that assault the senses.

Common forms were posters and propaganda songs.

But the world is moving from the streets to the digital world and therefore the form of propaganda is adapting as well.

You've probably heard the term propaganda song before. Ask your parents if there's a song that comes to mind. Often they had a political reason and the aim was to motivate the people for some purpose.

Catchy melody, rhythm, simple lyrics, repetition of the chorus... that are **propaganda songs**. The songs have many advantages that can get under our skin. It is therefore not surprising that people and also the whole groups (even political) tried to influence the society by these songs. You can express a lot through the song. But will everyone understand what the author or singer is trying to tell the listeners?

In the past, both propaganda phrases and criticism of society were hidden in the lyrics - even in small hints. Some songs were heard repeatedly from the radio, others were banned (for example in the Czech republic, the work of Marta Kubišová, Karel Kryl, Waldemar Matuška and many others)

Try to find examples from your country.

What is censorship?

Can everyone in the world say and write what they want?
How is it in our country? Is there censorship/self-censorship?

The infographic consists of two main sections. The top section has a green header with the title 'What is censorship?' in yellow. Below the header, on a tan background, is the definition: 'It is a control of what is publicly communicated (e.g. in the media, freedom of self.expression), the content is limited - most often by the state, religious organization or other important institution or individual.' The bottom section has a green header with the title 'What is self-censorship?' in yellow. Below the header, on a tan background, is the definition: 'Censorship made by the author himself (for example, for fear that his text might not otherwise be accepted by superiors/institutions, the public...) The author himself avoids content, opinions or attitudes that could be problematic; the author reduces the mentioned parts if necessary.' The infographic is decorated with colorful triangles and navigation icons (home, back, forward).

What is censorship?

It is a control of what is publicly communicated (e.g. in the media, freedom of self.expression), the content is limited - most often by the state, religious organization or other important institution or individual.

What is self-censorship?

Censorship made by the author himself (for example, for fear that his text might not otherwise be accepted by superiors/institutions, the public...) The author himself avoids content, opinions or attitudes that could be problematic; the author reduces the mentioned parts if necessary.

In our country, we are quite used to saying what we want. Is this the case in the rest of the world?

Think about it and name an example where you think it's liberal and where you think it's worse. Discuss it with your classmates, don't be shy to express your opinion.

Remember that *one man's freedom ends where another's begins*.
It is always necessary to respect others as well as the laws in force.

The degree of freedom in the world

On this world map you see several colours.

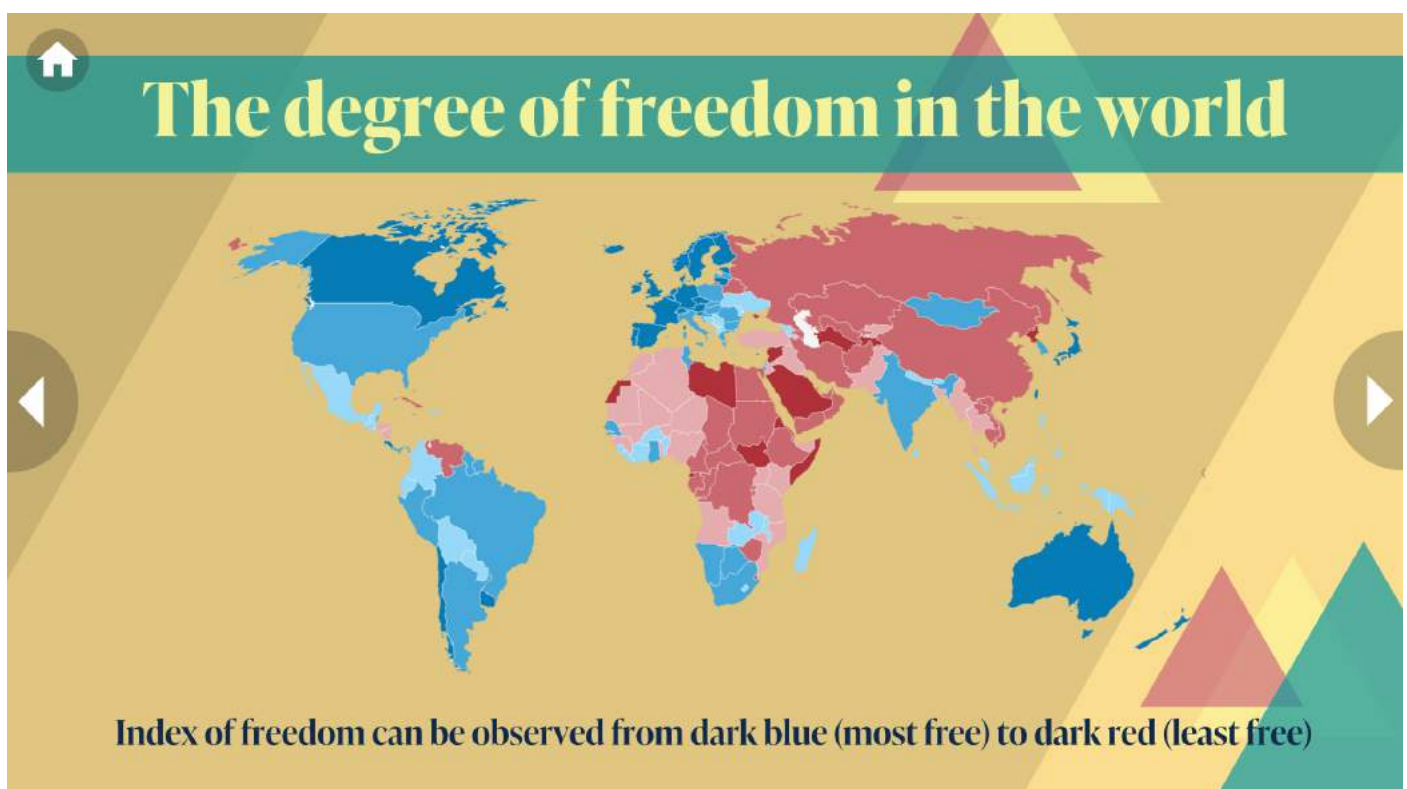
The blue shades represent a greater degree of freedom than the red shades.

The lighter the blue, the more liberal the country.

But people in the countries in red shades don't have it easy.

In our region, we are quite used to saying what

we want. Is this the case in the rest of the world? Think about it.



Do you think that some countries may want to influence other countries?

In which countries do you think this is theoretically possible?

What impact can Western countries have on Europe?

What impact can Eastern countries have on Europe?

Press freedom situation in the world

Freedom of the press or **freedom of the media** is the principle that communication and expression through various media, including printed and electronic media, especially published materials, should be considered a right to be exercised freely. Such freedom implies the absence of interference from an overreaching state. Its preservation may be sought through constitution or other legal protection and security.



In 1993, the United Nations named 3 May as annual **World Press Freedom Day**. The themes for the 2015 World Press Freedom Day are independent and quality journalism, gender and media, and digital safety for journalists and their sources

International protection of press freedom

Freedom of expression and of information are established as human rights in several international instruments such as the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (Article 19), and **the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (Article 19). Besides, several international organisations provide regular reports on media freedom, for instance the **OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**. An effective protection of press freedom and freedom of expression is provided within the framework of the Council of Europe, in particular in Article 10 of the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**, on freedom of expression.

The End

Conclusion

Propaganda, manipulation, hoaxes, fake news... Are you starting to worry that you can never find out what is right and real?

BINGO - this is exactly the main goal of those who participate in the running of this merry-go-round. To flood society with dozens of topics, thousands of opinions and texts precisely in order to make people give up on the effort to find out the truth.

But if we try to choose verified sources and sort the information that comes to us, we are on the right track to outsmart all these merry-go-round movers.



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